

Keeping Extra Weight Off During the Holiday Season

Many of us know that holiday season stretch from November until January often causes a weight gain of about five to seven pounds. For many of us, including those with chronic disease such as heart disease or diabetes, even a small weight gain cannot be healthy.

Here are some tips to help you enter the New Year without extra pounds:

- Plan, plan, plan. Decide what holiday meals you will be preparing or attending. Make a list of each meal and what possibly will be served. Are there occasions that you could skip this year? We are often invited to holiday open houses in addition to traditional holiday meals. What about school, church or community celebrations? If these involve food, prioritize the ones you really want to attend and plan to not attend the rest.
- Once you have chosen which meals or parties you will attend, make a list of what is likely to be served. If you are diabetic, you also want to note what time of the day the event is held so that you can plan your other meals and snacks around the event.
- Be aware of the carbohydrate count of the favorite foods you are likely to eat, especially holiday snacks and desserts. How can you fit these goodies into your meal plan? If you are attending events where you will furnish a dish, consider taking a salad, vegetable tray or healthier version of your favorite dessert.
- Pay attention to portion control. If you are not sure what your plate should look like there are several websites you can visit Choose MyPlate.gov is one also the American Diabetes Association has an interactive tool called "Create Your Plate." It lets you plan a variety of meals.
- With the many holiday foods to choose from, pick your favorite three or four foods to eat. Start filling your plate with your healthiest choices first and remember that half of your plate should be fruits and vegetables. For people with diabetes it should be low carb. Vegetables.
- If you can't bear the thought of missing all of the traditional foods offered, make each serving a small spoonful. A small spoon of dressing, mashed potatoes, corn will fit in the one-third quarter of you plate.
- Stay active. Instead of watching football or taking a nap right after the Thanksgiving meal, go for a walk. And if you must watch the game, walk around or march in place during commercials.

Thanksgiving is just over two weeks away. By planning, you can survive without the guilt of the extra pounds.

Join us in participating in "Maintain No Gain" Challenge. Make a commitment to yourself and your health to maintain your current weight or to gain no more than two pound from November 21 through January 1, 2017.

There will be two weekly emailed educational messages each week. You will track your weigh and keep track. The challenge is to maintain your pre-weight or gain no more than 2 pounds during the six weeks.

You keep track on your own scale or one at your work. There is also a scale at the Parker County Extension Office that will be available for you to come and weigh.

Sign up by calling: 817-598-6168 or email us at kl-smith@tamu.edu. Tracking forms will be available to email or you can visit our website www.parker.agrilife.org .